

Huge plans for Summer Hill

Fiona Brady

SLEEPY Summer Hill is bracing itself for the biggest development in its history.

After a year's hiatus, the new owners of the Summer Hill Flour Mill precinct, EG Funds Management, presented a sketchy vision for the 3.4ha site to Ashfield Council and about 80 locals last Tuesday night.

The company is planning a mix of apartments, townhouses and shops and wants the council to rezone the site.

The developers antagonised some of those present by refusing to reveal how many dwellings they have planned for the site.

Summer Hill councillor Caroline Scott said this would cause apprehension in the community.

"The mill is situated at one of the worst [traffic] choke points in the Inner West," she said.

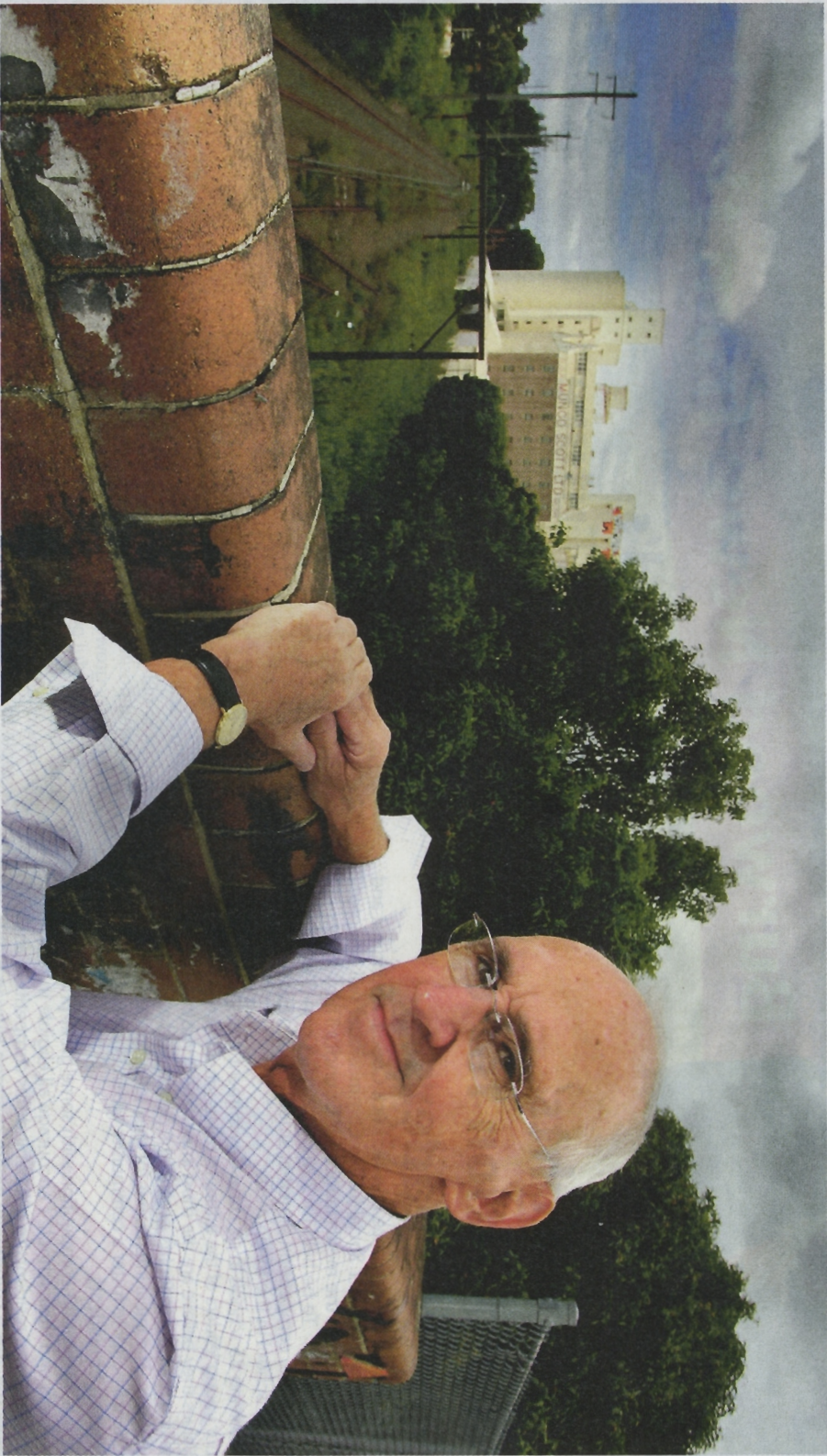
"This large site, 34,000sq m, if rezoned and densely redeveloped, could yield hundreds of new dwellings, which together with the McGill St redevelopment, could gridlock Summer Hill."

For almost a year, controversy has been raging over the McGill St development, also known as Lewisham Towers, which is adjacent to the flour mill.

Demian Construction wants to build five six- to 14-storey towers on a podium with 524 apartments and more than 12,000sq m of retail space.

Ashfield mayor Ted Cassidy said he still had an open mind on the flour mill site but wanted to see a master plan before he would consider a rezoning.

He said both the mill and Lewisham Towers would have a massive impact on the residential amenity of Summer Hill.



Mayor Ted Cassidy at the Summer Hill mill site.

Photo: PHIL BLATCH

"The State Government is telling us that this is the sort of development they want to happen in the Inner West," Cr Cassidy said.

"The rationale is that all the services are there – the sewerage, the water, the drainage, although we have doubts.

"That ancient sewerage is 100 years old or more and could not cope with the amount of development that the State Government is envisaging for that area.

"These things will all be addressed at the time of a development applica-

tion." He was critical of a "not very well thought out comment" made by the developer, Michael Easson, at Tuesday night's meeting.

"He said if he doesn't get a rezoning then he can get a trucking company who is very keen to utilise that site as a depot," he said.

"Our community would not be happy with that either.

"Those sorts of comments do not help the situation."

The Courier understands that developers plan to conduct a community consultation process in March.

MILL HISTORY

- SUMMER Hill's historic flour mill stopped production at 9am on December 22, 2008, the day most of the workforce walked out the gates for the last time.
- The mill had been in operation for more than 80 years. Its owners, Allied Mills, has relocated to a new \$85 million factory at Picton.
- EG Property bought the flour mill site in September 2007.



The development site is marked by the red line.